

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated November 22, 2002 (Paper No. 8). Claims 1 to 23 are in the application, of which Claims 1, 12, and 23, the independent claims, are being amended. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

By the Office Action, Claims 1 to 5, 7 to 16 and 18 to 23 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent 5,943,669 (Numata) and U.S. Patent 5,987,460 (Niwa), and Claims 6 and 17 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Numata, Niwa and U.S. Patent 5,878,414 (Miike).

The present invention is generally directed to retrieval of information from a database based on an entered search condition, and display of the retrieved information according to the degrees of coincidence between the information contained in the database and the input search condition, wherein the output size and position of information is based on the degree of coincidence.

Turning to the specific language of the claims, Claim 1 defines an information retrieval apparatus. A calculation means calculates the degree of coincidence between a search condition being input and each information to be retrieved in the database. A determination means determines, on the results of retrieval respectively for the plural information to be retrieved of a high degree of coincidence, the output feature amount of each result of retrieval according to each degree of coincidence. And, an output means outputs the results of retrieval with an output mode in a manner that information having a higher degree of coincidence is output in a larger size at a position closer to a center of an output part based on each output feature amount.

The applied art is not seen to teach or to suggest the foregoing features of the invention. In particular, the applied art is not seen to teach or to suggest at least the features of calculating a degree of coincidence between a search condition being input and each information to be retrieved in the database, determining, an output feature amount of each result of retrieval according to each degree of coincidence, and outputting the results of retrieval with an output mode in a manner that information having a higher degree of coincidence is output in a larger size at a position closer to a center of an output part based on each output feature amount.

Numata is seen to concern retrieving parts of a document based on the context of the entire document. Numata is seen to describe sorting a document into its structural elements, such as chapters, sections and paragraphs, and determining hierarchical relationships of the structural elements in the document. (See Numata, col. 3, lines 45 to 67, and col. 5, lines 51 to 53). At col. 13, lines 25 to 32, Numata is seen to describe a technique of developing the hierarchical relationship between structural elements in the case of HTML, for which no hierarchically logical structure can be expressed. In such a case, Numata indicates that size of a heading can be considered to correspond to a hierarchical level. Determining the hierarchical relationship of structural elements in a document using character size is not seen to be the same as outputting the results of retrieval with an output mode in a manner that information having a higher degree of coincidence is output in a larger size at a position closer to a center of an output part based on each output feature amount. In addition, it is conceded in the Office Action, that Numata does not teach outputting results of retrieval with an output mode based on each output feature amount.

Accordingly, Numata is not seen to teach or to suggest calculating a degree of coincidence between a search condition being input and each information to be retrieved in the database, determining, an output feature amount of each result of retrieval according to each degree of coincidence, and outputting the results of retrieval with an output mode in a manner that information having a higher degree of coincidence is output in a larger size at a position closer to a center of an output part based on each output feature amount.

Niwa is not seen to remedy the deficiencies of Numata. Niwa is seen to concern a document retrieval assisting method (See Niwa, abstract, and col. 2, lines 15 to 38). Niwa is seen to describe that topic words are divided into frequency classes according to the frequency of the word in a document group and then displayed as a graph or list form. (See Niwa, col. 2, lines 15 to 38 and col. 6, lines 18 to 60.

Niwa is not seen to teach or to suggest calculating a degree of coincidence between a search condition being input and each information to be retrieved in the database, determining, an output feature amount of each result of retrieval according to each degree of coincidence, and outputting the results of retrieval with an output mode in a manner that information having a higher degree of coincidence is output in a larger size at a position closer to a center of an output part based on each output feature amount.

Miike is not seen to remedy the deficiencies of Numata and Niwa. Miike concerns a data retrieval system which uses secondary information for retrieval. (See Miike, abstract). Miike is not seen to teach or to suggest calculating a degree of coincidence between a search condition being input and each information to be retrieved in the database, determining, an output feature amount of each result of retrieval according to each degree of coincidence, and outputting the results of retrieval with an output mode in a

manner that information having a higher degree of coincidence is output in a larger size at a position closer to a center of an output part based on each output feature amount.

Therefore, for at least the foregoing reasons, Claim 1 is believed to be in condition for allowance. Further, Applicant submits that Claims 12 and 23 are believed to be in condition for allowance for at least the same reasons.

The remaining claims are each dependent from the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,


Attorney for Applicant

Registration No. 39,000

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-2200
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

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